

Message Text

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15

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05

IO-10 OMB-01 SY-05 OPR-02 A-01 SSO-00 /091 W

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R 170814Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3893

AMCONSUL UDORN

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY PARIS

CDR USSAG NKP

CINCPAC

DIA

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, SGEN, LA, US

SUBJECT: WORLD VISION TERMINATES ACTIVITIES IN LAOS;

OTHER VOLAGS COME UNDER PRESSURE

BEGIN SUMMARY. AFTER A PROLONGED PROTEST BY ITS LAO EMPLOYEES, MOST OF WHOM HAD BEEN UNCEREMONIOUSLY RIFFED, THE U.S. VOLUNTARY AGENCY WORLD VISION HAS TERMINATED ITS OPERATIONS IN LAOS AND HAS OFFICIALLY BEEN TAKEN OVER BY THE PGNU. DISSIDENT WORLD VISION EMPLOYEES AND STUDENT DEMONSTRATORS HAVE TARGETED CHRISTIAN & MISSIONARY ALLIANCE (CMA) AS WELL, WITH RESULT THAT ALL OF CMA' AMERICAN PERSONNEL AND DEPENDENTS HAVE BEEN WITHDRAWN AT LEAST PROVISIONALLY TO THAILAND. REMAINING U.S. VOLUNTARY AGENCIES IN LAOS ARE LIKELY TO COME UNDER SIMILAR PRESSURE AT AN EARLY DATE. END SUMMARY.

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1. WORLD VISION (WV) HAS TERMINATED ITS ACTIVITIES IN

LAOS AND WITHDRAWN BOTH ITS AMERICAN DIRECTOR (J. DON SCOTT) AND THAI ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (SAKDA PHAPHOON). LAO CABINET DECIDED MAY 7 TO TAKE OVER WV, AND ON MAY 9 SCOTT SENT INTERIOR MINISTER PHENG PHONGSAVAN A LETTER FROM BANGKOK FORMALLY TRANSFERRING ALL WV ASSETS IN LAOS TO THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNION (PGNU).

2. WV'S WITHDRAWAL WAS CULMINATION OF MONTH-LONG EMPLOYEE SIT-IN AT ITS OFFICES IN VIENTIANE. SIT-IN GREW OUT OF NOTIFICATION FROM SCOTT TO LAO EMPLOYEES ON MARCH 22 THAT, FOR BUDGETARY REASONS, WV WOULD BE CUTTING ITS STAFF BY APPROXIMATELY TWO-THIRDS. SIT-IN, WHICH BEGAN ON APRIL 2, TOOK ON MORE SERIOUS TONE TOWARD END OF APRIL, ESPECIALLY AFTER SAKDA CAME TO OFFICE ON APRIL 29 AND, ACCORDING TO WORKERS, THREATENED LAO THERE WITH A PISTOL. ON MAY 1, LABOR DAY, DEMONSTRATORS PUT UP PLACARDS AT OFFICE DENOUNCING SCOTT AND SAKDA; ENDORSING 18 POINTS; ETC. THEY ALSO STARTED TO USE LOUDSPEAKERS. ON MAY 4 SCOTT RETURNED TO VIENTIANE PREPARED TO NEGOTIATED WITH WORKERS BUT FOUND THAT THEY HAD BEEN INFILTRATED BY RBY REPRESENTATIVES OF THE LEFTIST "21 ORGANIZATIONS." IT WAS HIS CONCLUSION THAT A CHRISTIAN PHILANTHROPIC ORGANIZATION, SUCH AS WV, CANNOT OPERATE IN THE POLITICALLY CHARGED ATMOSPHERE PREVAILING IN LAOS AT PRESENT TIME. HE LEFT LAOS HASTILY MAY 7 WITHOUT HAVING MET WITH WORKERS; REPORTEDLY THE DISSIDENTS HAD THREATENED TO TAKE SCOTT HOSTAGE AND TURNED UP AT THIS HOTEL JUSTMINUTES AFTER HE LEFT FOR AIRPORT.

3. RADIO PATHET LAO (RPL) ANNOUNCED MAY 10 THAT CABINET HAD "FINALLY" RESPONDED FAVORABLE TO "JUST DEMAND" OF WV PROTEST GROUP BY CONFISCATING ALL OF ITS PROPERTIES AND "EXPELLING" ALL OF ITS AMERICAN AND THAI PERSONNEL. RPL CALLED WV "ONE OF MANY ORGANIZATIONS SET UP BY U.S. IMPERIALISTS AND THEIR LACKEYS AS TOOLS FOR CIA TO SERVE THE U.S. WAR SCHEME IN LAOS."

4. WE HOPE THAT PGNU'S OFFICIAL TAKEOVER OF WV AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SCOTT'S ASSURANCES TO LAO OFFICIALS THAT WV IS PREPARED TO PAY OFF WORKDERS IN ACCORDANCE WITH LAO LAW WILL PUT AN END TO THIS LONG-FESTERING PROBLEM. UNFORTUNATELY, SOME TWENTY DISSIDENTS ARE STILL ENCAMPED AT WV OFFICES AND THEY HAVE GIVEN SIGNS OF TRANSFERRING THEIR HOSTILITY TO A SECOND RELIGIOUS AGENCY, THE CHRISTIAN AND MISSIONARY ALLIANCE, WHICH HELPED WV GET ESTABLISHED IN LAOS SIX YEARS AGO BUT WHICH HAS NO DIRECT LINK

TO WV.

5. SINCE SCOTT'S DEPARTURE SOME WV DISSIDENTS HAVE CONTACTED CMA PERSONNEL AND THREATENED AT LEAST ONE OF THEM WITH PHYSICAL HARM. IN VIEW OF DETERIORATING SITUATION CMA DIRECTOR CLEMENT DREGER DECIDED MAY 15 TO TAKE HIS REMAINING SIX PERSONNEL ACROSS BORDER TO THAILAND TO SPEND WEEKEND AND SEE HOW THINGS SETTLE HERE. DREGER IS WELL AWARE THAT MAY 9 DEMONSTRATION AT NATIONAL STADIUM INCLUDED DEMANDS FOR CMA TO BE REMOVED FROM LAOS BECAUSE IT TOO IS "TOOL OF CIA."

6. FOR UDORN: SINCE SEVERAL CMA REPS WERE CAPTURED IN VIETNAM, THEY ARE UNDERSTANDABLY NERVOUS ABOUT SITUATION HERE. WE HAVE SUGGESTED THAT DREGER CONTACT CONSULATE FOR APPRAISAL OF SITUATION HERE BEFORE DECIDING WHETHER TO RETURN. WE RECOMMEND DREGER WAIT AT LEAST UNTIL WE SEE WHETHER VARIOUS DEMONSTRATIONS EXPECTED NEXT WEEK MATERIALIZE.

7. COMMENT: LEFTIST PRESSURE APPLIED TO DOOLEY FOUNDATION, WV AND NOW CMA AND OPERATION BROTHERHOOD IS LIKELY TO SPREAD TO ALL AMERICAN VOLAGS IN LAOS, INCLUDING ASIA FOUNDATION. IN VIEW OF INCREASINGLY HOSTILE POLITICAL CLIMATE HERE IT IS PROBABLE ALL VOLAGS WILL HAVE TO CLOSE UP SHOP.
CHAPMAN

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